



# **Tennessee Economic Council on Women**

**Biennial Report  
2008**



# Welcome

September 2008

The Honorable Phil Bredesen  
The Honorable Ron Ramsey  
The Honorable Jimmy Naifeh  
The Honorable Riley C. Darnell  
Members of the Tennessee General Assembly  
Members of the Women's and Black Legislative Caucuses  
Fellow Citizens of Tennessee

Greetings!

On behalf of the Tennessee Economic Council on Women, we are pleased to present the Council's fifth Biennial Report. As we reflect upon the Council's first ten years, we are honored to be a part of work that has:

- Educated people in all of Tennessee's 95 counties about the importance of women's economic issues and the impact these issues have on Tennessee's overall economic health;
- The publication of ground-breaking research on issues such as the economic effects of Women's Political Participation;
- The presentation of several conferences and forums across the State designed to educate women and girls about economic issues, including financial literacy and business planning, and to provide them with access to experts in women's economic issues and personal economic growth;
- The establishment and continuation of relationships with businesses, foundations, other government agencies and individuals across the state to provide programs that enhance our understanding of economic issues and the role women play in developing economic policy.

These activities, further detailed in the following report, reflect the success we've shared over the past two years. The Council is tasked with work that is vitally important for Tennessee's growth and we appreciate the continued dedication of our colleagues and partners who join us in assessing and addressing the economic issues facing Tennessee's women. Thank you for your continued support and commitment to improving our economic status.

Sincerely,



Carol Berz  
Chair



Jennifer Rawls  
Executive Director



## Economic Council on Women

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*“The Economic Council on Women helps us optimize women's talents as business leaders, business owners and employees to better respond to the challenges and demands of this changing workforce.”*

**Senator Jamie Woodson,  
Council Member**

# Council Mission

## Mission

The Tennessee Economic Council on Women is an economic advocate for women. It assesses Tennessee women's economic status, and develops and advocates solutions to address women's needs and helps them achieve economic autonomy. It sets priorities that are timely, cost-effective, and likely to result in positive changes for women.

## Vision

The Tennessee Economic Council on Women will be the information source for Tennessee women.

## Who We Are

The Tennessee Economic Council on Women is a state agency with 21 appointed members and an Executive Director. The Governor appoints six (6) members. The Speakers of the House of Representatives and the Senate jointly appoint nine (9) representatives of the State's Development Districts. The Speaker of the Senate appoints two (2) Senators and the Speaker of the House appoints two (2) Representatives. The Tennessee black caucus of state legislators and the legislative women's caucus make one appointment each.

## What We Are About

The One Hundredth General Assembly created the Tennessee Economic Council on Women (TCA § 4-5-101, et seq.) to address the economic concerns and needs of women in Tennessee. These concerns and needs include, but are not limited to, employment policies and practices, educational needs and opportunities, child care, property rights, health care, domestic relations and the effect of federal and state laws on women.

The Council conducts research, holds hearings, develops recommendations and policy, educates the public, and engages in activities for the benefit of women. It is authorized to request funds from the federal government and private sources. The Council consults with and reports to the Governor, the Women's Legislative Caucus, the General Assembly and the pertinent agencies, departments, boards, commissions and other entities of State and local governments on matters pertaining to women.



Above: Council members (l to r) Faith Tapp, Yvonne Wood and Arlene Garrison at the 2007 Economic Summit for Women.

Below: Women's Economic Council Foundation board member Deborah Reed (left) and Tracey Carter at the 2007 Summit reception.



# Council Members, Staff & Interns

## Executive Committee

**Carol Berz**, Chair, Southeastern Tennessee Development District Representative  
**Rep. Janis Sontany**, Vice-Chair, Tennessee House Representative  
**Rep. Nathan Vaughn**, East Tennessee, Black Legislative Caucus Representative  
**Gwendolyn Sims Davis**, Middle Tennessee, Governor's Cabinet Representative  
**Carol Danehower**, West Tennessee, Tennessee Board of Regents Representative  
**Ellen Vergos**, Secretary, Memphis Area Associated Governments Representative  
**Yvonne Wood**, Treasurer, Greater Nashville Regional Council Representative  
**Margaret Jane Powers**, Immediate Past Chair, Upper Cumberland Development District Representative

## Council Members listed alphabetically

**Sandra Bennett**, At-Large Women's Group Representative  
**Shawn Francisco**, Northwestern Tennessee Development District Representative  
**Arlene Garrison**, University of Tennessee Board of Trustees Representative  
**Rep. Sherry Jones**, Tennessee House Representative  
**Linda Manning**, Independent Colleges and Universities Representative  
**Elliott Moore**, First Tennessee Development District Representative  
**Tommie Morton-Young**, At-Large Women's Group Representative  
**Rep. Mary Pruitt**, Tennessee Women's Legislative Caucus Representative  
**Wendy Pitts Reeves**, East Tennessee Development District Representative  
**Sandra Silverstein**, Southwest Tennessee Development District Representative  
**Brenda Speer**, South Central Tennessee Development District Representative  
**Senator Mike Williams**, Tennessee Senate Representative  
**Senator Jamie Woodson**, Tennessee Senate Representative

*"The Economic Council on Women has become a strong positive force for women in our state because a number of Tennessee women became so concerned to learn that we ranked very poorly when compared with the rest of the nation in important areas such as education, wages, health care and political participation. We knew that one way to bring attention to these issues and see substantial improvement was to work to get legislation passed to establish a Council that would focus on Tennessee-specific research that would result in helping women become more economically savvy and autonomous. The Council has continued to work closely with the Governor's office to help increase the number of women serving on the State's boards and commissions. I feel privileged to be a part of it."*

**Yvonne Wood,  
Council Member**

### **Council Staff**

**Jennifer Rawls**, Executive Director

**Julia Reynolds**, Research Assistant

**Tracey Roberts**, Secretary

### **Former Council Members** (with service Sept. 2006- Sept. 2008)

Kim McMillan, Women's Legislative Caucus

Yasmeen Mohiuddin, Independent Colleges and Universities

### **Former Staff and Interns** (with service Sept. 2006- Sept. 2008):

Angel Foster, Secretary

KaShawna Brooks, Intern

Tara Daniel, Intern

Mark Epps, Intern

Ariel Goldring, Intern

Jason Lackey, Intern

Andrea Otte, Intern

*“Being a Council intern allowed me to integrate so many sides of myself--the academic researcher, the girl who was always looked to in class for the "feminist perspective," and a lifetime Tennessee citizen who knows the way things work--into something more, someone practical. Empty rhetoric begone!--this was a time for substantive change, and I brought my experiences to the table to participate.”*

**Tara Daniel,  
Council Intern**

# Fifth Biennial Report Overview

The Council's establishing legislation charges the Council to submit a biennial report. We are pleased to present this, our Fifth Biennial Report. During the past twenty four months, the Council's focus has been fourfold:

- I. Increasing Council programs in state development districts through development of regional advisory councils and region-specific programming for women in business
- II. Educate policy makers and the general public about the economic impact of women's political participation in Tennessee
- III. Increase women's representation on state boards and commissions by recommending, to the Governor and others, qualified women to serve on state boards and commissions; and
- IV. Improve the limited state funding of the TECW by collaborating with other state agencies, community groups, businesses, women's advocates and others to provide research and/or programs that advance women's economic status.

## About this Report

This report is organized around the Council's primary activities over the past two years. Following are summaries of its research and published reports on the economic impact of Tennessee women's political participation and the lack of preventative healthcare among Tennessee women. Also included in the report are summaries of Council initiatives to bring experts from various industries together with women in Tennessee communities to offer education, networking and mentoring opportunities. The Council's work to increase the number of women on state boards and commissions is also detailed here.



Above: 2007 Economic Summit for Women keynote speakers Marie Wilson (left), President of The White House Project, and former U.S. Representative Pat Schroeder

Below: Tennessee Governor Phil Bredesen welcomes attendees at the 2006 Economic Summit





# Research and Publications

Research is at the heart of the Council's work to educate. Past publications such as the *The Impact of Domestic Violence on the Tennessee Economy* have been useful tools in working for women-positive policy and public awareness of how issues impact Tennessee's economy.

The bulk of our research over the past two years has been focused on two reports: ***Achieving An Equally-Gendered Government: The Economic Impact of Women's Political Participation in Tennessee*** and ***The Economic Impact of Insufficient Preventive Healthcare for Tennessee Women***. The political participation report, issued in 2007, found that women's voice in policymaking is key to the successful passage of legislation supporting women's economic well-being. The Council plans to use the information in this report to work for women's political causes around the state, for political networking opportunities for women, and for women's equal representation in all legislative bodies in Tennessee.

The Council has also updated a county-by-county resource guide for Tennessee women and the Status of Women in Tennessee Counties reports. Both are available on the Council's website ([www.tennesseewomen.org](http://www.tennesseewomen.org)).

To compliment our previous research the Council began its newest project on the economic impact of the lack of preventive healthcare for Tennessee's women in the spring of 2008. This research will be released October 27, 2008.



Left: Lynda Sagrestano and Deborah Clubb of the Center for Research on Women with former U.S. Representative Pat Schroeder and U.S. Representative Marsha Blackburn at the 2007 Summit reception

Right: 2007 Summit attendees (l to r) Council Member Sandra Bennett, Tennessee Senator Rosalind Kurita, and Cynthia Bennett



# Achieving an Equally Gendered Government: The Economic Impact of Women's Political Participation in Tennessee

When Women are at the Table, the Conversation Changes

## Report Overview

Does women's presence in local, state and national legislative bodies matter? The Council's survey of three decades of research indicates a resounding 'yes'!

In 1996 Tennessee was ranked 39th nationally for number of female legislative representatives in a study by the Institute for Women's Policy Research. Since then, Tennessee has dropped to 43rd nationally. On the aggregate level, women's presence in the legislatures and other state-level elected offices seems closely associated with better policy for women. It follows that, for women in both parties, an increase in the number of female representatives at all levels of government would be a push for woman-friendly legislation across the board. Further, in states where women's political status is strong, their economic status is strong as well. Tennessee, unfortunately, follows this pattern—conversely—in that there is both a weak political and economic status of women.

Many theories exist regarding the barriers that prevent women from attaining gender parity in political offices; some place blame on the political system while others blame societal-based gender prejudices. Whatever the reasons, the barriers appear stronger in Tennessee and other southeastern states than in other areas of the country. The lack of pervasive female candidacy engenders an unrepresentative democratic system which, at all levels, fails to sponsor women-friendly legislation. Council research indicates that many factors effect the impact of women as policy-makers. Most notable among these factors are the presence of a women's caucus, the percent of women serving in a legislature, and the availability of interaction with external women's organizations. It is clear that women policymakers much reach a critical mass in a legislative body in order to effect significant amounts of women-friendly policy.

Women in Tennessee are neither receiving, nor advocating for, their equitable political representation at the local, state or national level. Parity at the national level depends on equality at the state level and equality at the state level depends on equality at the local level. For improvements to reach the largest arena, they must begin in the smallest. It is the responsibility of the government who, by neglect, has promoted historic unequal participation, to affirmatively repair its mistakes. However, women also must take the initiative and an active role in increasing their own participation in government. With the government's help, and with the collective will and action of women, improvements can be made.

The Council offers the following recommendations:

*“Women make up more than one-half of the population, more than one-half the students in Tennessee universities and colleges and less than one-third of Tennessee government representatives. In order to continue the economic growth of Tennessee, these numbers must change.”*

**Achieving an Equally Gendered Government**

## **Recommendations:**

### **I. GOVERNMENT POLICY SHOULD**

- Encourage equal participation at all levels of education. Girls should not be programmed into traditional female studies that lead to low-paid occupations.
- Rather they should be given more opportunities to pursue careers which lead to political office, for example economics, law and political science.
- Discourage sex-role stereotyping. Government should promote changes in the way women are treated in textbooks, movies and television. Women should not only be portrayed as housewives, mothers, teachers or nurses, but also as successful business professionals with high income levels.
- Change the demographics of upper-level state political participation to reflect equity. The government should pursue a policy of increased appointment of qualified women to cabinets, boards and judicial posts.
- Fund and support high level and grassroots women's groups who work for the economic interests of women. This policy, in turn, will aid to ameliorate the economic challenges to the state budget.
- Provide grants or other funding to sponsor bi-partisan partnerships to research and report on women's issues, including the effect of legislation.

### **II. WOMEN SHOULD**

- Obtain better education and job training that provides more direct routes to political involvement.
- Build networks that increase access to information and reduce isolation.
- Work to improve the image of women by monitoring textbooks and media portrayals.
- Register to vote – and regularly vote for the candidates and issues of their choice.
- Form women's groups for lobbying activities, skills development and support of candidates.
- Work within political party structures to support women candidates and men who are sensitive to women's concerns.
- Develop fundraising skills and their own resource base with which to support their candidates.
- Develop mentor relationships with those holding positions of influence in parties or governments.
- Believe in their ability to be successful public servants.

**For a full copy of this report, and for all previous Council reports, visit [www.tennesseeewomen.org](http://www.tennesseeewomen.org).**

# Advisory Councils

In order to effectively assess the economic status, needs and goals in each of Tennessee's 95 counties, the Council must engage women from every locality. The Council achieves this, in part, through its Advisory Councils.

The Council has created, or is in the process of developing, an Advisory Council in each of the State's nine Development Districts. It is the mission of these Advisory Councils, made up of volunteers, to be the eyes and ears of the Council in their area and to report to the Council the economic issues and needs of women in those areas.

To do this, each Advisory Council plans its own functions and assessment tools. The Southeast Tennessee Advisory Council, for example, hosted 'listening tours' in each of the district's counties. At these tours, women and men from the area were invited to speak in an open forum about the economic issues facing them and their colleagues and neighbors. In one county, educational opportunities exist for women but inadequacies in transportation and childcare services make it difficult to take advantage of them. In another county, there are no women's organizations to assist women in encouraging or developing their profession skills and abilities. Of course, there are some common themes across the State — pay equity, access to high-paying jobs, medical care and insurance. This listening tour model is being used by several Advisory Councils and continues to be a terrific means by which the Council can identify issues, create partnerships and strategically plan the Council's program of work.

Advisory Councils are currently operating in the following Development Districts: East Tennessee, Southeast Tennessee, Greater Nashville, South Central Tennessee, Southwest Tennessee, Northwest Tennessee and Memphis Governments Area. The remaining districts, First Tennessee and Upper Cumberland, are in the planning and building stages.



Above: 2006 Economic Summit for Women keynote speaker Helen Thomas (right), First Lady of the Press, with (l to r) Tennessee Senator Thelma Harper and Council Member Yvonne Wood

Below: 2007 Summit attendees Stacy Nunally (left), Director of Gender Matters Programming at the Vanderbilt University Margaret Cunningham Women's Center, with student Paige Allen



### **Greater Nashville Advisory Council Listening Tour**

In 2007 the Greater Nashville Advisory Council began a series of public hearings which will eventually encompass all the counties in this district. The Advisory Council held two hearings in Rutherford County in 2007 with about 50 people in attendance. The hearings allowed attendees the opportunity to suggest and discuss some of the most pressing economic issues for women in Rutherford County. Once all the counties have been visited, the Advisory Council will be able to effectively target its work to the specific needs of the diverse communities that make up Greater Nashville.

### **Memphis Area Advisory Council Transportation Project**

One of the significant barriers to employment in the Memphis Area for low income women is the lack of public transportation to and from key employers. In 2007 the Memphis Area Advisory Council began planning a project that would bring attention to the gaps in the local public transit system. That effort is ongoing and will, the Council believes, highlight the need for public transportation routes that consider the locations of major employers, schools as well as the areas in cities where mass transit is most highly utilized.

### **South Central Tennessee Advisory Council Domestic Violence Hearing**

Following-up with the successes of the previous public hearings in Chattanooga, Nashville, Memphis, and Johnson City on the economic impact of domestic violence, the Council initiated similar hearings in more rural areas of the State. A hearing at Columbia State Community College drew members of law enforcement, the legal and health-care communities, business and industry and members of the community. During that hearing, the Council confirmed that domestic violence is as much of an economic barrier for women in these smaller communities as it is in the more metropolitan areas of the State.

*“My interest in being a member of the Council was and is to improve lives of women and their families in Tennessee by developing and promoting programs that will enhance economic opportunities for women. ”*

**Sandra Silverstein,  
Council Member**

# Conferences & Training

## Economic Summit for Women

Beginning in 2004, the Economic Council partnered with others to offer the Economic Summit for Women in Nashville. The goals of the Summit are primarily to develop a statewide platform for the economic issues of Tennessee women and their families, assess the impact of women's economic issues on Tennessee's overall economy, build upon a statewide network and create new partnerships and collaborations, and honor individuals and organizations that have illustrated exemplary support of women in Tennessee. The Summit brings together women from across the State and leaders in business, industry, government, the medical and legal fields and educators to focus their ideas and question about the status of women's economic autonomy. Information is given in both general and small group sessions about all aspects of career success and financial independence.

Recent keynote speakers include Governor Phil Bredesen, First Lady Andrea Conte, Karenna Gore Schiff, Patricia Schroeder, Dale Smith Thomas, Helen Thomas, and Marie Wilson. Sessions have included presentations on career advancement, networking, political participation and legislative issues, leadership and the economic status of women in Tennessee. The Council also awards "E" Awards ("E" for "Excellence and Equity") to individuals from across the State who have distinguished themselves in a specific field or life commitment that has contributed to improving the lives of girls and women in Tennessee. We are proud that the annual Summit has become one of the most well-regarded and well-attended events for women in the State and are pleased to have the opportunity to hear from them about the economic issues that continually affect their lives.

## Women Business Owners Opportunities Conference

In May of 2005, the Economic Council on Women, supported initially by a grant from the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development, the Council co-hosted the first Women Business Owner's Opportunities Conference in Memphis. With the tremendous success of the first event came a commitment to continue this program in West Tennessee and WBOOC events were held in June of 2006 and June of 2008. Speakers included Lurita Doan, former head of the Federal Government's Office of Accountability, Carolyn Hardy, owner of Hardy Bottling Co., and Lynn Norment, managing editor of *Ebony* magazine. The WBOOC differs from other conferences in that its sole focus is creating business and procurement opportunities and providing information about starting and staying in business. The event also includes a "business plan boot camp" where would-be business owners spend an intensive day of training in how to plan and write a business plan and then compete in plan presentations. Hundreds of women from West Tennessee have participated in the WBOOC and the Council remains committed to partner with organizations and companies in the area to better inform and equip women business owners.



Above: Women's Economic Council Foundation Member LaRita Mitchell and University of Memphis Vice President for Student Affairs Rosie Bingham at the Summit luncheon

Below: 2006 Summit keynote speakers (l to r) Tennessee First Lady Andrea Conte and Brenda Lee



# Regional Mini-Summits and Conferences

Working with the Department of Economic and Community Development's Business Enterprise Resource Office (BERO), the Council has presented mini-summits, or regional conferences, throughout the State. This ongoing partnership underscores the Council's commitment to building agency and business relationships to bring important and timely information to Tennessee's women.

## Southeast Tennessee Economic Mini-Summit

The Southeast Tennessee Advisory Council has hosted three Economic Mini-Summits for Women in. Each year, this mini-summit offers a forum for women to learn, discuss and network with leaders in the professional community and other women. Participants discover new ways of achieving their personal and professional goals, connect with resources in their community and are able, in turn, to help other women and their community prosper. The 2007 event was held at Cleveland State Community College and the 2008 mini-summit was held at Bryan College in Dayton, Tennessee.

## Moving On, Moving Up!

Blount County hosted the women of the East Development District, in 2007 at the Blount County campus of Pellissippi Community College, and at Maryville College in 2008. Following the model of the Economic Summit for Women, these conference provide expert leaders, motivational speakers and questions and answer sessions for women who seek to be a part of Tennessee's economic growth. In addition to extremely talented local presenters, Commissioner Susan Whitaker of the Department of Tourist Development provided the keynote address at the 2008 Moving On, Moving Up! Event.

## Tri-Cities Regional Women's Business Summit

May 2008 saw the first Tri Cities Regional Women's Business Summit in the First Tennessee Development District. The summit, held at Northeast State Technical Community College and produced in partnership with the Kingsport Office of Small Business Development & Entrepreneurship, included sessions addressing the fundamentals of funding and building a business, professional development, and electronic media.



Left: Council Members (l to r) Dr. Tommie Morton-Young and Tennessee Representative Nathan Vaughn at the 2006 Economic Summit in Nashville

Right: Tennessee Women's Political Caucus member Emily Richard (left) and Tennessee Governor's Office Press Secretary Lydia Lenker at the 2007 Summit reception



# Partnerships

The Council is committed to building partnerships with other governmental agencies, businesses and other organizations in order to educate women and girls about economic issues, initiatives and methods of improving their economic autonomy. Listed below is a representation of those groups from all across the state with whom the Council has worked over the past two years.

## Government Agencies

- Governor's Office of Diversity Business Enterprise
- Metropolitan Nashville/Davidson County Government
- Oak Ridge National Laboratory
- Shelby County Government
- Small Business Administration
- Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development
- Tennessee Department of General Services
- Tennessee Department of Health
- Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development
- Tennessee Department of State
- Tennessee Department of Treasury
- Tennessee Department of Tourist Development
- Tennessee Lottery Corporation
- Tennessee Technology Center at Jacksboro
- Tennessee Valley Authority

## Business Community

- Airport Marriott Nashville
- Alcoa
- Asbury Place
- AT&T
- Blount Memorial
- Community Bank & Trust of Cheatham County
- Dell
- FedEx Corporation
- First National Bank
- Grant Konvalinka & Harrison, P.C.
- H+M
- KPMG, LLP
- Memphis Convention & Visitors Bureau
- Memphis Business Journal
- Memphis Light Gas & Water
- Memphis Woman's Magazine
- Nashville Business Journal



# Partnerships

NetGain Corporation  
News Channel 5  
Private Dispute Resolution Services, LLC  
St. Thomas Health Services  
Waller Lansden Dortch and Davis, PLLC  
WUOT

## Organizations

Association of American University Women  
Athena International  
Business & Professional Women/USA  
CABLE Nashville  
Center for Strong Communities at Maryville College  
Chattanooga Chamber of Commerce  
Girls Incorporated of Memphis  
Girl Scouts of Middle Tennessee  
Kingsport Office of Small Business Enterprise  
Margaret Cunningham Women's Center at Vanderbilt  
Middle Tennessee YWCA  
Nashville Women's Political Caucus  
National Association of Women Business Owners  
Rutherford County Chamber of Commerce – Women's Council  
Tennessee Women's Political Caucus  
Women In Numbers  
Women's Economic Council Foundation, Inc.

## Colleges and Universities

Bryan College  
Cleveland State Community College  
Columbia State Community College  
Maryville College  
Middle Tennessee State University  
Northeast State Technical Community College  
Pellissippi State Community College  
Southwest Tennessee Community College  
Tennessee State University  
Tennessee Tech University  
University of Tennessee  
Vanderbilt University



Above: (l to r) Council Immediate Past Chair Jane Powers nominated Annabelle Clement O'Brien for an "E" Award at the 2006 Summit presented by First Lady Andrea Conte

Below: Representative Sherry Jones receives an "E" Award at the 2007 Summit



# Other Projects

## Diversity Business Marketplaces

The Council was very proud to partner with the Department of General Services to present Diversity Business Marketplaces in 2006 and 2007 in Chattanooga, Nashville and Memphis. These Marketplaces brought together representatives of city, local and state government agencies, schools, colleges and private businesses for a premier business development opportunity for minority-owned, woman-owned and small businesses.

In addition to workshops on topics such as financing for businesses, marketing, procurement and accounting, these unique events also provided for on-the-spot bidding for state contracts. By mid-day of the Memphis event, for example, \$122,000 in state contracts had been awarded to businesses at the forum. At the Nashville event, Metro Nashville, another event partner, hosted one-on-one consulting sessions with business professionals who offered their expertise in starting, building and growing a small business.

One of the positive economic factors for women in Tennessee is the number of women-owned businesses that are founded each year. According to the Center for Women's Business Research, in of 2006 there were approximately 193,058 privately-held, 50% or more women-owned firms in Tennessee, generating more than \$34 billion in sales and employing 182,927 people. The Council's participation in the Diversity Business Enterprise built relationships with new partners, emphasized the importance of women-owned businesses to Tennessee's economy and encouraged women to consider business ownership as a method of improving their economic independence.

## GRITS (Girls Raised in Tennessee Science)

The Council is honored to serve on the leadership team of the GRITS program with Middle Tennessee State University and a host of other organizations who seek to encourage and assist young women to prepare themselves for a dynamic and profitable career in the science-related industries.

The GRITS Collaborative Project collectively pulls resources together to build a stronger community across Tennessee in support of girls and women in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). Established through a National Science Foundation dissemination grant supporting research on gender in science and engineering, the program seeks to help Tennessee become the premier state in the nation for women in STEM degrees and careers. The project serves all 95 counties and will bring together programs, resources and organizations that are committed to supporting and encouraging more Tennessee girls to enter the STEM education pipeline and to complete STEM degree programs.

*“I am proud to serve on the Economic Council on Women, the state agency with a central role in providing information about economic status of women and, through that information, influencing policy to advance the state of Tennessee as well as women in the state. One of our more critical missions is assuring that women and girls throughout the state have access to careers in lucrative fields related to science and technology.”*

**Dr. Arlene Garrison,  
Council Member**

# Boards and Commissions

When Governor Bredesen took office in January 2003, he invited the Economic Council on Women to submit names of qualified women to be considered for state boards and commission vacancies. To meet this need, the Council created a process to identify, recruit and recommend qualified female candidates for administration boards and commission posts.

The Council's contributions to this effort have resulted in the appointment of Patricia Pierce to the Human Rights Commission, Gloria Jenkins to the Tennessee Medical Laboratory Board, Susan Carson to the Board of Examiners for Nursing Home Administrators and Paulette Coleman to the Tennessee Arts Commission, among others. Recent appointees include Dr. Tommie Morton-Young to the Tennessee Judicial Council and Janna Herbison to the Suicide Prevention Advisory Council. These women learned of the open positions on state boards and commissions through the Council's statewide communications and submitted their names for consideration. All were appointed by Governor Bredesen.

The Governor's Office of Boards and Commissions routinely sends the Council's office a report of vacancies on state boards and commissions. The Council utilizes its statewide database of women advocates to announce the monthly vacancies and encourages qualified women to apply for the vacancy. Women send the required documents to the Council's Board and Commissions Chair, Yvonne Wood, who then prepares a letter to the Governor, including the pertinent data.

The Council is not obligated to conduct any investigation of any applicant or nominee, including contacting any references. If a Council member is personally acquainted with an applicant or nominee that may be indicated. Otherwise, the Council is not responsible for vetting or determining the qualifications of any applicant or nominee. Further, that the Governor's office is likely to receive applications and nominations from other sources, and that it has the discretion to appoint whomever it chooses for a position. The Council's Executive Director maintains a file reflecting the following: name of the woman recommended by the Council for each specific vacancy, address, phone number, date sent to the Governor, and date appointed by the governor to a board/commission, and a hard copy of all letters and bios/resumes.

It is the Council's belief that giving women greater voice on Tennessee's Boards and Commissions helps increase the visibility of the economic issues facing Tennessee women which fosters more discussion and implementation of women's economic development.

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*"The health of our state  
depends on the economic fitness of  
our women. If not now, when..?"*

**Dr. Carol Berz,  
Council Chair**



Left: 2007 'E' Award winner Agenia Clark, President and CEO of the Girl Scout Council of Cumberland Valley, with Middle Tennessee Girl Scouts at the 2007 Economic Summit in Nashville

# Moving Forward

As the Council moves into its second decade of work, there is no doubt that women are making strides toward economic autonomy. More than half of the students in Tennessee's colleges and universities are women. Women-owned businesses in Tennessee are making a tremendous positive impact both in the amount of money made (and taxes paid) and the number of people employed. There are also an increasing number of role models for Tennessee women in leadership, politics and business.

The need, however, is still great. More than half of the labor force is, or soon will be, made up of women. Women make the vast majority of purchasing decisions in households across the nation. Yet, there are corporations that make and sell products designed specifically for women and yet don't have female representation on their boards. Tennessee schools are now including a financial literacy course but 2008 is the first year this requirement has been in place. In a seemingly ever-increasing number of women led, single-parent homes, choices are being made between basic health care and maintaining a home. It becomes apparent that these issues are cyclical and by working to reduce the negative impact of one leads to positives moves toward economic prosperity.

It is gratifying to witness an increase in the number women who understand the need for financial education and who are committed to improving their economic status. The partnerships the Council has established between women from all across Tennessee and businesses, agencies and organizations that are dedicated to helping women succeed are making real and important changes. The Council's plan of work will focus on continuing to build these bridges.

Research will continue to be the primary focus of the Council's work. The Council's previously published research has been used in considering policy and legislative changes. The Council's unique function in focusing on *economic* issues makes Tennessee a leader in the ongoing public discussions about women's roles, women's contributions and women's needs. The research completed by the Council has, and continues to be, used by other states and local agencies as the basis for their research and replication.

The Council is tremendously excited about the work already accomplished and the relationships that have been established. Building on these successes, the future looks bright for Tennessee's women.



Above: Tennessee Senator Beverly Marrero with 2006 Keynote Speaker Karenni Gore Schiff and St. Thomas Health Services' Rebecca Climer

Below: 2007 Women's Economic Council Foundation Scholarship recipient Anjali Bisaria with scholarship presenter Vanderbilt Women's Basketball Coach Melanie Balcomb



# Appendices

## I. Enabling Legislation

4-50-101. Council created - Membership - Term of service.

(a) A Tennessee economic council on women, hereinafter referred to as the "economic council," is created. The economic council shall be composed of twenty-one (21) members. Nine (9) members shall be jointly appointed by the speaker of the senate and the speaker of the house of representatives, one (1) such member to be so appointed from each of the nine (9) multi-county development districts created under title 13, chapter 14, part 1. Two (2) senators shall be appointed by the speaker of the senate and two (2) representatives shall be appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives. One (1) member shall be appointed by the Tennessee black caucus of state legislators and one (1) member shall be appointed by the legislative women's caucus. One (1) cabinet member shall be appointed by the governor. Three (3) members shall be appointed by the governor, one (1) such member to be so appointed from nominations received from each of the following: the board of trustees of the university of Tennessee, the Tennessee board of regents and the Tennessee independent colleges and universities, which nominees shall be academic faculty or staff:

- (1) From state or private four-year universities or colleges having a graduate program; and
- (2) With research and teaching experience in the field of economic concerns of women.

(b) The governor shall appoint two (2) members at-large from a slate of six (6) nominees jointly recommended through Links, one hundred (100) black women, league of women voters of Tennessee, Tennessee women's political caucus, Tennessee lawyers association for women and housing authority tenant associations. The recommending groups shall actively seek nominees from as broad a range as reasonably possible of local, civic and business groups. The appointing authorities shall ensure that their appointments broadly represent the community in such areas as age, sex, minority groups, economic levels, employment and political affiliation.

(c) The first appointive members shall hold office for staggered terms. Of the nine (9) appointees from the development districts, the speakers shall jointly appoint three (3) for two-year terms, three (3) for four-year terms, and three (3) for six-year terms. Of the three (3) academic appointees of the governor, one (1) academic member shall be appointed for a two-year term, one (1) for a four-year term, and one (1) for a six-year term. One (1) of the members at-large appointed by the governor shall serve an initial four-year term. The other member at-large appointed by the governor shall serve an initial six-year term. All other appointees shall be for six-year terms. All subsequent appointments of members shall be for full six-year terms. No appointed member shall be appointed to more than two (2) consecutive six (6) year terms. Vacancies shall be filled by appointment pursuant to the criteria in this section only for the remainder of the unexpired term. Any member initially appointed for a six-year term shall not be eligible for reappointment without a two-year absence from commission membership. All other members shall be eligible for reappointment for a six-year term. A two-year absence from the economic council membership qualifies any member for reappointment following the criteria of this section.

[Acts 1998, ch. 1045, § 1.]

4-50-102. Meetings - Officers - Bylaws - Rules - Executive director - Duties of council.

(a) (1) The economic council shall meet as necessary to transact business; provided, that meetings shall be held at least quarterly. Special meetings may be called by the chair or by three (3) members of the economic council, upon delivery of written notice to each member of the economic council. All members shall be duly notified of the time and place of any regular or special meeting at least seven (7) days in advance of such meeting. The economic council may conduct meetings which must be open to the public by:

- (A) Telephone conference calls with speaker phones; and/or
- (B) Electronic conferencing.

Such meetings shall conform to the requirements of title 8, chapter 44, part 1. The economic council shall elect at the first regular meeting of each calendar year a chair, a vice chair, and three (3) representatives, one (1) from each of the three (3) grand divisions, who shall comprise the five-member executive committee to function between quarterly meetings. The chair or the executive director may call meetings of the executive committee. The executive committee shall carry out the matters delegated to it by the full economic council. The majority of the members of the economic council shall constitute a quorum and the concurrence of a majority of those present and voting in any matter within its duties shall be required for a determination of matters within its jurisdiction.

(2) Each member shall serve without compensation. Each member is eligible for expense reimbursement only for attendance at the regularly scheduled quarterly meetings. All reimbursement for travel expenses shall be in accordance with the provisions of the comprehensive travel regulations promulgated by the department of finance and administration and approved by the attorney general and reporter.

(b) (1) The economic council shall promulgate bylaws to provide for the election of officers, establishment of committees, meetings and regulations as to procedural matters of the economic council. The economic council shall conduct its meetings using Robert's Rules of Order.

(2) The council is also authorized to promulgate, amend, revise and rescind rules for its own functioning in accordance with the Uniform Administrative Procedures Act compiled in title 4, ch. 5.

(c) The economic council has the authority to hire an executive director who shall serve at the pleasure of the economic council.

(d) The economic council shall address the economic concerns and needs of women in Tennessee, which concerns and needs include, but are not limited to, employment policies and practices, educational needs and opportunities, child care, property rights, health care, domestic relations, and the effect of federal and state laws on women. In order to address these concerns and needs of women, the council may conduct research, hold hearings, develop recommendations and policy, educate the public and engage in activities for the benefit of women.

(e) The economic council is authorized to request funds from the federal government and private sources to implement subsection (d).

(f) The economic council shall consult with and report to the governor, the women's legislative caucus, the general assembly, and the pertinent agencies, departments, boards, commissions and other entities of state and local governments on matters pertaining to women. Furthermore, the economic council may request assistance from the departments of state and local governments, and advisory committees as needed.

(g) (1) The economic council shall serve as an advocate for women.

(2) It shall, further, set up and execute a program to find and encourage women to serve on state boards and commissions.

(h) To the extent resources to do so exist, the economic council shall evaluate and quantify the results of job training programs that currently exist, and evaluate whether they are helping women to obtain better employment.

(i) For administrative purposes, the economic council on women is attached to the department of state for all administrative matters relating to receipts, disbursements, expense accounts, budget, audit, and other related items.

[Acts 1998, ch. 1045, § 2.]

#### 4-50-103. Biennial report - Other recommendations.

Beginning in the year 2000, the economic council shall submit a biennial report to the governor, the women's legislative caucus and the general assembly by September 1 following the conclusion of any regular annual session occurring in an even-numbered year. Such report shall summarize the economic council's activities, and finding on the economic status of women in the state of Tennessee during the preceding two (2) years. The report shall include recommendations for more effective use of existing resources and services for women, and proposals for the development of programs, opportunities and services, which are not otherwise provided, with the aim of development of a comprehensive and coordinated system of services for women. Furthermore, the economic council may make such other recommendations as the economic council deems appropriate. A copy of such report shall be published and disseminated to the public as well as copies made available in the offices of the economic council for review by the public.

[Acts 1998, ch. 1045, § 3.]

#### 4-50-104. Executive director - Duties and responsibilities.

(a) The executive director shall be chief administrative officer of the economic council and pursuant to § 4-50-102(c), shall serve at the pleasure of the economic council. The executive director shall be a full-time employee of the economic council and shall have education as deemed necessary by the economic council. The economic council shall fix the executive director's duties and responsibilities, which are in addition to those specified in this chapter. The economic council shall evaluate periodically the performance of the executive director. The executive director has the authority to conduct the ordinary and necessary business in the name of the economic council in accordance with the provisions of this part or as determined by the economic council.

(b) The executive director has the following duties:

(1) Supervise the expenditure of funds and be responsible for complying with all applicable provisions of state and federal law in receipt of and the disbursement of funds;

(2) Serve as an advocate for women;

- (3) Serve as the executive officer of the economic council; and
- (4) (A) Employ personnel as authorized by the economic council.
- (B) The executive director shall hire and remove any clerical personnel in accordance with the civil service system.

[Acts 1998, ch. 1045, § 4.]

4-50-105. Conflict of interest.

The conflict of interest provisions set forth in § 12-4-101, shall apply to members of the economic council.

[Acts 1998, ch. 1045, § 5.]

## **II. Amended By-Laws**

### **ARTICLE I NAME, OFFICE AND PURPOSE**

Section 1.1: Name and Principal Office: The name of this body shall be the Tennessee Economic Council on Women ("Economic Council."). The principal office shall be in Nashville, in such location as assigned by the state of Tennessee. The Economic Council is established and governed by Tenn. Code Ann. Section 4-50-101 et seq., as it is amended or will be amended from time to time and is hereafter referred to as the "Statute."

Section 1.2: Purposes: The purposes of the Economic Council as set forth in the Statute and related purposes, i.e., are:

To address the economic concerns and needs of women in Tennessee, including, but not limited to the following:

- a. employment policies and practices,
- b. educational needs and opportunities,
- c. child care,
- d. property rights,
- e. health care,
- f. domestic relations, and
- g. the effect of federal and state laws on women;

To serve as an advocate for women with economic needs and concerns;

To set up and execute a program to find and encourage women to serve on state boards and commissions; and

To the extent resources exist, to evaluate and quantify the results of job training programs that currently exist, and evaluate whether they are helping women to obtain better employment.



Section 1.3: Means of accomplishment of purposes: In order to address the concerns and needs of women, the Economic Council:

- a. is authorized to request funds from the federal government and private sources to implement the Economic Council's purposes;
- b. may conduct research, hold hearings, develop recommendations and policy, educate the public and engage in activities for the benefit of women;
- c. may request assistance from the departments of state and local governments, and advisory committees as needed; and
- d. form local "advisory councils" as defined in these Bylaws, to advise and assist the Economic Council in fulfilling its purposes.

Section 1.4: Reports: The Economic Council shall consult with and report to the governor, the women's legislative caucus, the general assembly, and the pertinent agencies, departments, boards, commissions and other entities of state and local governments on matters pertaining to women.

## ARTICLE II MEMBERSHIP AND MEETINGS

Section 2.1: Members: The Economic Council shall be comprised of up to twenty one members, appointed in accordance with the Statute. The terms of the members and the procedure for filling vacancies is prescribed by Statute. The Members shall, to the extent possible, assist the appointing officials in filling vacancies by seeking out and recommending qualified candidates who are qualified and who desire to serve on the Economic Council.

Section 2.2: Meetings: (a) Regular Meetings: The Economic Council shall meet at least quarterly, on such dates as may be set by the Executive Committee. Regular meetings must be preceded by at least seven (7) days written or electronic notice to all Members of the date, time and place of the meeting. In order to rely on electronic notice to a particular member, such member shall indicate consent in writing to receive notice at a particular email address.

(b) Special meetings: Special meetings of the Economic Council may be called by the Chair or at least three Members of the Economic Council. Special meetings must be preceded by at least seven (7) days written or electronic notice to all Members of the date, time and place of the meeting and the business transacted at these meetings shall be confined to the business stated in that notice.

Section 2.3: Quorum: Pursuant to the Statute, the presence of a majority of the Members shall constitute a quorum and the concurrence of a majority of those present and voting in any matter within its duties shall be required for a determination of matters within its jurisdiction. Members attending by telephone shall be considered to be present for the purposes of this section. A quorum, once established, will not be broken by the withdrawal of enough votes to leave less than a quorum and the votes present may continue to transact business until adjournment.

Section 2.4: Vacancies: A vacancy shall occur on the Economic Council when a member dies, resigns, moves from Tennessee or moves from the district the member represents, is removed because she does not perform her duties, whether because of illness, disability or other reason, or if her term on the Economic Council expires and she is not reappointed by the appointing authorities. If a member is absent, without good cause, from three (3) consecutive Economic Council meetings, the Executive Committee members may remove the absentee Council member by a vote of two-thirds of the other members of the Executive Committee present at a meeting at which there is a quorum.

### ARTICLE III DEFINITIONS

Section 3.1: Definitions: Descriptive terms used in these Bylaws shall have the meaning or meanings set forth in the Statute, which statute is incorporated in and made a part of these Bylaws and as set forth herein.

Section 3.2: Council Member: An individual, duly appointed to the Economic Council, whose term of office has not expired or who has not been removed, shall be considered a Council Member, entitled to vote on the business of the Economic Council.

Section 3.3: Advisory Council: Each development district is authorized and encouraged to form an “advisory council” comprised of individuals and organizations interested in accomplishing the purposes of the Economic Council within a particular development district within the state. Such advisory councils shall assist the Economic Council in determining specific needs and concerns of women in a particular development district; may, under the auspices of the Economic Council, assist the Economic Council in determining and implementing projects in development districts to accomplish one or more of the purposes of the Economic Council; and may report on particular projects developed by such advisory councils to accomplish the purposes of the Economic Council. The advisory councils may request that the Economic Council use its powers and authority to assist in conducting research, holding hearings, developing recommendations and policy, educating the public and engaging in discussions and research. The advisory councils are not autonomous. The Executive Committee shall approve all activities, projects, events, public statements and press releases of the advisory councils.

Section 3.4: Conflicts: The conflict of interest provisions set forth in TCA § 12-4-101, which statute is incorporated by reference, shall apply to members of the Economic Council. In order to implement these provisions, members shall be required to fill out and sign written disclosure of conflicts forms to be submitted annually and placed on file in the principal office of the Economic Council. In the event that a conflict or potential conflict is disclosed, the members may require the conflicted member to take appropriate action to address the particular conflict (e.g., recusal from discussion and/or voting on any action deemed to present a conflict of interest).

### ARTICLE IV EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Section 4.1: Selection : The Executive Committee comprised of the Chair, Vice-Chair, and a representative from each of the three Grand Divisions, will be selected at the last meeting of the calendar year. In accordance with the Statute, the Economic Council shall elect the Executive Committee at the first regular meeting of the following calendar year. The immediate past chair of the Executive Committee, shall serve as a nonvoting member of the Executive Committee if she is still a member of the Economic Council.

Section 4.2: General Powers and Duties: The Executive Committee has all the powers and duties allowed by the Statute and these Bylaws. The final responsibility for the management, control and conduct of the affairs of the Economic Council shall belong to the Executive Committee, whose responsibilities shall include, but not be limited to the following:

- (a) The management of business and affairs of the Economic Council between scheduled Economic Council meetings. The Executive Committee may implement and exercise all powers of the Economic Council and do all such lawful acts and things as

are not prohibited by the Statute or these Bylaws, or are not reserved to the Members;

- (b) Policy-making necessary to manage the affairs of the Economic Council;
- (c) Economic Council fiscal responsibility and oversight;
- (d) Authorize any officer or officers, agent or agents, to enter into any contract or execute and deliver any instrument or instruments, in the name of, and on behalf of, the Economic Council and such authority may be general or confined to specific instances;
- (e) Confirm the maintenance of all Economic Council books and records, including the books of membership of the Economic Council, at the principal office of the Economic Council, or at a place in Davidson County, Tennessee which is reasonably accessible to the members; and
- (f) Periodic review of programs to maintain consistency with the mission.

Section 4.3: Term of Office: The Executive Committee members shall serve until the first regular meeting of the Economic Council in the following calendar year, or until their successors are duly elected and qualified. Each Executive Committee member may succeed themselves for one additional one-year term in the same positions. Members who fill vacancies on the Executive Committee shall be deemed to have served a full one-year term if such member takes office before July 1, and in that case, such member may serve one additional full year in that position. Members who fill vacancies on the Executive Committee shall be deemed not to have served a full one-year term if such member takes office on or after July 1, and such member may serve two additional full years in that position.

Section 4.4: Vacancies: A vacancy on the Executive Committee shall be filled by the Economic Council, to serve the balance of the unexpired term of the vacating Executive Committee member.

Section 4.5: Meetings: A meeting of the Executive Committee may be called by the Chair or any three (3) members of the Executive Committee. Meetings must be preceded by at least seven (7) days written or electronic notice to all Members of the date, time and place of the meeting. Executive Committee members may waive notice before, during or after any meeting of the Executive Committee. Whenever the Executive Committee is required or permitted to take any action by vote, such action may be taken without a meeting, upon the written consent signed by all of the Executive Committee members entitled to vote thereon.

Section 4.6: Quorum: At all meetings of the Executive Committee, the presence of a majority of the Executive Committee members then in office shall constitute a quorum and the concurrence of a majority of those present and voting in any matter within its duties shall be required for a determination of matters within its jurisdiction. Members attending by telephone shall be considered to be present for the purposes of this section. A quorum, once established, will not be broken by the withdrawal of enough votes to leave less than a quorum and the votes present may continue to transact business until adjournment.

## ARTICLE V OFFICERS

Section 5.1: Officers: In addition to the Executive Committee, the Economic Council shall have the following officers: Secretary and Treasurer.

Section 5.2: Selection: A proposed slate of officers will be presented to the Economic Council by a Nominating Committee, appointed by the Chair, at the fourth meeting of the calendar year. Additional nominations may be made from the floor by the Council Members in attendance at the meeting. The Economic Council shall elect the slate of officers at the fourth meeting and shall elect the officers at the first regular meeting of the following calendar year.

Section 5.3: Term of Office: Officers shall serve for terms of one year and may succeed themselves twice in the same office.

Section 5.4: Powers and Duties of Officers:

A. The powers and duties of Secretary are to:

1. Attend all meetings of the Economic Council and of the Executive Committee;
2. Ensure that all votes and proceedings of meetings are recorded and maintained, all notices are of meetings are given in accordance with these Bylaws; and
3. Other similar duties as requested by the Chair and/or Executive Committee.

B. The powers and duties of Treasurer are to:

1. Monitor the funds of the Economic Council;
2. Report on the financial status of the Economic Council at each of the quarterly meetings;
3. Serve as Chair of the finance committee, if appointed; and
4. Other duties as from time to time may be requested by the Chair and/or the Executive Committee.

## ARTICLE VI EMPLOYEES

The Economic Council shall employ those persons it deems necessary to the implementation of its mission, goals and activities. The job descriptions of the employees shall be determined by the Chair and will be available upon request at the offices of the Economic Council. At a minimum, the Economic Council shall employ an Executive Director. All employees of the Economic Council will be subject to the rules, terms of employment and policies applicable to all employees of the State of Tennessee.

## ARTICLE VII COMMITTEES

The Council or the Executive Committee may designate standing and ad hoc Committees to carry out the purposes and business of the Economic Council. The existing standing committees are the Legislative Committee and the Advisory Councils.

## ARTICLE VIII CONDUCT OF BUSINESS

Any contract, conveyance or other instrument to be executed by the Economic Council shall be executed by the Chair or the Chair's designee.

## ARTICLE IX REVIEW OF BYLAWS

These Bylaws may be amended at any regular or special meeting of the Economic Council. A copy of any proposed amendments shall be included in the written notice of the meeting.

# III. Council Members

## Executive Committee Members

Carol Berz, L.C.S.W., J.D., Ph.D., B.C.D., Chair, owns Private Dispute Resolution Services, a mediation services and training organization. Dr. Berz is a TN. Supreme Court Rule 31 Listed mediator and trainer in both general civil and family mediation. The Council's Southeast Development District representative, she organized and produced the Council's first Economic Impact of Domestic Violence forum in Chattanooga in November 2002. She chairs the Council's Economic Impact Committee. cbb4pdrs@aol.com

Representative Janis Sontany, Vice-Chair, is in her second term in the Tennessee General Assembly and was previously a member of Metro Council for 8 years. She recently retired from DuPont with 21 years of service in government affairs and customer service. She is a past president of the Nashville Women's Political Caucus and was their 2002 Athena Nominee. She served as a board member of Outlook Nashville and was awarded the CMRA Public Leader of the Year in 1998. Rep. Sontany is a Representative of the Tennessee House on the Council. rep.janis.sontany@legislature.state.tn.us

Representative Nathan Vaughn B.S., East Tennessee, represents House District 2, which includes part of Sullivan County. He is an insurance agent who is an Alderman and former Vice Mayor. He is a member of the Children and Family Affairs, Finance Ways and Means and Transportation Committees. He is also a member of the House Domestic Relations Subcommittee. Representative Vaughn is the former president of Girls Inc. rep.nathan.vaughn@legislature.state.tn.us

Hon. Gwendolyn Sims Davis, Middle Tennessee, is Commissioner of the Tennessee Department of General Services and represents the Governor's Cabinet on the Council. Prior to her role as Commissioner, she was President and Chief Consultant of Sims Associates, a Nashville-based consulting firm specializing in human resources management, government compliance and corporate diversity programs. [gwendolyn.s.davis@state.tn.us](mailto:gwendolyn.s.davis@state.tn.us)

Carol Danehower, DBA, West Tennessee, is Associate Dean for Academic Programs in the Fogelman College of Business and Economics at The University of Memphis. She received her doctorate in Management from the University of Kentucky. As Associate Dean, Danehower is responsible for all academic programs (undergraduate, masters, and Ph.D.) in the College, including recruiting, admissions, advising, curriculum, and scheduling. Danehower represents the Tennessee Board of Regents on the Council. [vdanehwr@memphis.edu](mailto:vdanehwr@memphis.edu)

Ellen Vergos, Secretary, is an attorney at Wyatt, Tarrant & Combs, LLP and represents the Memphis Area Development District of the Economic Council on Women. She has been appointed to two terms as United States Trustee of the Federal Districts of Tennessee and Kentucky, serving from 1995-2003. As a United States Trustee, she was responsible for supervising the administration of all bankruptcy cases in a two-state area; overseeing legal work and personnel management in five offices; and appointing and supervising trustees in Chapters 7, 11, 12 and 13 of the Bankruptcy Code. [evergos@wyattfirm.com](mailto:evergos@wyattfirm.com)

Yvonne Wood, M.Ed., Treasurer, of Lebanon, is Chair of the Boards and Commissions Committee and the Council's Middle Tennessee Development District Representative. She owns Wood Consultants, a conference and event planning company, is President-elect of Middle Tennessee's CABLE women's organization and Executive Vice President of the ATHENA Foundation, International, promoting opportunities for women worldwide. [ycwood@aol.com](mailto:ycwood@aol.com)

Margaret Jane Powers, J.D., Immediate Past Chair, of Crossville, is an attorney representing individuals and corporations in industry, insurance and other businesses. She is the Council's Upper Cumberland Development District Representative and chairs its Legislation and Policy Committee. She serves on the Women's Economic Council Foundation Board, and serves as the President of the Tennessee Lawyers' Association for Women. [mjp@margaretjanepowers.com](mailto:mjp@margaretjanepowers.com)

### **Council Members**

Sandra Bennett, of Manchester, is an At-large Women's Group Representative to the Council. Her professional experiences range from Managing Administrator for Spherion Human Resource Consulting Group, to Regional Office Coordinator for CertainTeed Corporation, to Fleet Administrator for Siemens Corporation in Atlanta and Facilities Manager for a realty company in Michigan. Bennett is currently President-elect of Tennessee Women's Political Caucus and is serving her fourth year on the Board of the Nashville Women's Political Caucus as the Vice President of Legislation. She is a long-time advocate for women's issues in the Tennessee General Assembly and serves as Chair of the legislative workshop "Everyday Politics for Everyday Women." [sbennett-tecw@hotmail.com](mailto:sbennett-tecw@hotmail.com)

Shawn Francisco was appointed in 2001 to serve as the Weakley County Director of Finance. She has twice received the nationally-recognized Government Finance Officers Association Distinguished Budget Presentation Award, making Weakley County one of only five Tennessee counties to receive this award. She also serves on the Everett-Stewart Regional Airport Board, is active in numerous political and professional organizations and is an alumnus of the Tennessee Local Government Leadership Program & Leadership Weakley County. [franciscos@k12tn.net](mailto:franciscos@k12tn.net)

Arlene A. Garrison, Ph.D., of Knoxville, is the Assistant Vice President of the Office of Research and Information Technology at the University of Tennessee. She has served on the UTK Chancellor's Commission for Women, the American Chemical Society Women Chemist's Committee and the American Chemical Society President's task force on Women's Issues. She serves on the boards of the Knox County Public Building Authority and the Southern Appalachian Science and Engineering Fair. She is the University of Tennessee's Council Representative. [garrison@utk.edu](mailto:garrison@utk.edu)

Representative Sherry Jones, of Nashville, has been a House member of the 99th through 105th General Assemblies. Rep. Jones is a member of the Nashville Women's Political Caucus and Davidson County Democratic Women. She also volunteers for Court Appointed Special Advocates. Prior to her work in the General Assembly, Rep. Jones was a member of the Metro Nashville Council for the 30th District from 1987 to 1995. She has received leadership awards from the Mid-Cumberland Council on Children and Youth, Tennessee Trial Lawyers Association, Tennessee AFL-CIO, Tennessee Citizen Action, Tennessee March of Dimes, and Vanderbilt Law School, among others. [rep.sherry.jones@legislature.state.tn.us](mailto:rep.sherry.jones@legislature.state.tn.us)

Linda Manning became the Director of the Margaret Cuninggim Women's Center in November of 1997. She teaches "Gender and Violence" for the Women and Gender Studies Program and "Trauma: Impact and Intervention" for the Human Development Counseling Program. Prior to coming to Vanderbilt, she was the Director of Psychological Services at St. Edward's University in Austin, Texas. Linda completed her Ph.D. in Counseling Psychology, with a concentration in the Psychology of Women, at the University of Texas at Austin in 1988. She has conducted programming and training activities related to gender equity and diversity issues for over twenty years. She is a licensed psychologist and specializes in working with survivors of trauma. She also teaches practices that focus on contemplation and spiritual growth. [linda.g.manning@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:linda.g.manning@vanderbilt.edu)

Elliott Moore, M.S.S.W., of Bristol, is the Director of Community and Government Relations for Mountain States Health Alliance (MSHA), a hospital healthcare system based in Johnson City. She is National Chair of the Family ReUnion Conference, an initiative that addresses family issues, and Past President of the Tennessee and Nashville Women's Political Caucuses. She has previously served on the Council's Executive Committee. [mooreeg@msha.com](mailto:mooreeg@msha.com)

Tommie Morton-Young, Ph. D, of Nashville, currently owns and operates AfrAgenda Literary Management and Publishing and Authentic Tours of Historic Nashville and Middle Tennessee and serves as Chair of the Education Committee for the NAACP. Dr. Morton-Young has previously been a professor and administrator, worked for the Library of Congress and for the YWCA. She has served on the National Institute of Health Advisory Council, as Chair of the North Carolina Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission, as President of Davidson County Democratic Women and on the National Coalition of 100 Black Women. Dr. Morton-Young has broad service experience, is a Past-president of the Southeast branch of the Association of American University Women and has worked with the Commission on the Status of Women. [aagen1@msn.com](mailto:aagen1@msn.com)

Representative Mary Pruitt, of Nashville, is a retired educator and has served in the 94th through the 105th Tennessee General Assemblies. Rep. Pruitt is a member of 100 Black Women of Nashville and an honorary member of Sigma Gamma Rho. She is Past President of the Nashville Club-Nashville Association of Negro Business and Professional Woman's Clubs, Inc. and the Tennessee Middle District Civil Liberties League. Rep. Pruitt is a board member of Meharry Medical College, the Rochelle Center, and the Bethlehem Centers of Nashville. On the Economic Council, she represents the Women's Caucus of the state legislature. [rep.mary.pruitt@legislature.state.tn.us](mailto:rep.mary.pruitt@legislature.state.tn.us)

Wendy Pitts Reeves, L.C.S.W., of Maryville, is a sought after speaker, consultant and psychotherapist who specializes in issues impacting Tennessee women and teens. In addition to building and running an active psychotherapy practice, she has initiated and led several coalitions in Blount County to raise awareness and improve opportunities for women and girls in the area. Among those, the annual AAUW Sister to Sister Summits have been offering empowerment and mentoring to girls since 2001. Reeves has served on numerous boards and community groups, and was a member of the Leadership Blount Class of 2006. Recently, she entered her first political race, running successfully as an underdog to represent the 4th District on the Blount County Commission. [wpreeves@bellsouth.net](mailto:wpreeves@bellsouth.net)

Sandra Silverstein, of Brownsville, is Director of the WIA's Career Readiness Certificate program in Haywood County. This program is designed to help the unemployed find jobs and the underemployed find better jobs. Previously, she served as Executive Director of the Brownsville-Haywood County Chamber of Commerce for nine years and as an educator in high-need school systems for twenty years. She served two terms on the Madison County Commission and previously owned and managed an insurance company for six years. [lilly1@newwavecomm.net](mailto:lilly1@newwavecomm.net)

Brenda Speer, of Pulaski, is a partner in Professional Benefit Solutions, an employee benefits, insurance and investment firm. The Council's South Central Development District Representative, she also serves on the Women's Economic Council Foundation Board. She chaired the Council's 2002 Legislative Committee and served as Council Vice Chair from 2001 to 2002 and Council Chair from 2003 to 2004. She is a community activist who is a graduate of Tennessee Leadership and Leadership America. [brendaspeer@pbsllc.biz](mailto:brendaspeer@pbsllc.biz)

Senator Mike Williams, of Maynardville, has represented Tennessee Senate District 4 in the 100th through the 104th General Assemblies. Before that he was a representative in the Tennessee House for the 97th through the 99th General Assemblies. He currently serves as Senate Speaker Pro Tem and on the Senate Finance, Ways and Means Committee, the Senate Commerce, Labor and Agriculture Committee, and the Senate Rules Committee. He is a representative to the Council for the Tennessee Senate. [sen.micheal.williams@legislature.state.tn.us](mailto:sen.micheal.williams@legislature.state.tn.us)

Senator Jamie Woodson, of Knoxville, represented Tennessee Senate District 6 in the 104th General Assembly. Woodson served as a member of the House of Representatives for the 101st through the 103rd General Assemblies. She is Secretary of the Senate Republican Caucus, Chair of the Senate Education Committee, and serves on the Senate Judiciary Committee and the Senate Transportation Committee. She is a representative to the Council for the Tennessee Senate. [sen.jamie.woodson@legislature.state.tn.us](mailto:sen.jamie.woodson@legislature.state.tn.us)



#### IV. Council Members Donations In-Kind

The twenty-one members of the Economic Council serve on a completely volunteer basis. Their dedication to the Council's mission and their attention to the Council's work is a testament to the extraordinary leadership they provide to the state of Tennessee. The information presented here is only an overview of the time and effort the members provide.

Council Member with Position	Services
<b>Sandra Bennett</b> , At-Large Women's Group Representative	Attends Council meetings; speaks to area groups on the status of women and youth issues; meets with legislators and staff on behalf of the Council;
<b>Carol Berz</b> , Chair, Southeast TN Development District Representative	Plans and attends Executive Committee and Council meetings; serves as Chair of the Economic Impact Committee; meets with legislators on behalf of the Council; leads Advisory Council; speaks to area groups on the status of women and youth issues
<b>Carol Danehower</b> , Tennessee Board of Regents Representative	Attends Executive Committee and Council Meetings; serves as West Tennessee Representative to Executive Committee; participates on Advisory Council
<b>Gwendolyn Sims Davis</b> , Governor's Cabinet Representative	Attends Council meetings; consults with Council on policy and governmental issues that impact women, serves as Middle Tennessee Representative to Executive Committee; speaks to area groups on the status of women and youth issues
<b>Shawn Francisco</b> , Northwest TN Development District Representative (recently appointed)	Attends Council Meetings; leads Advisory Council
<b>Arlene Garrison</b> , University of Tennessee Representative	Attends Council meetings; serves as a member on the Economic Impact Committee; consults with Council on program development
<b>Sherry Jones</b> , Tennessee House Representative	Attends Council meetings. consults Council on legislative issues that impact women, advocates to governmental leadership about Council initiatives
<b>Linda Manning</b> , Independent Colleges and Universities Representative	Attends Council meetings; advises Council on educational matter relating to women; assists in building corporate/educational partnerships with Council
<b>Elliott Moore</b> , First TN Development District Representative	Attends Council meetings; leads Advisory Council; consults on program development in First Tennessee Development District

<b>Tommie Morton-Young</b> , At-Large Women's Group Representative	Attends Council meetings; consults with Council on policy issues that impact women; assists in building partnerships with other organizations
<b>Margaret Jane Powers</b> , Upper Cumberland Development District Representative	Attends Executive Committee and Council meetings; speaks to public groups on behalf of the Council; meets with legislators and staff on behalf of the Council; Chair of Legislative Affairs Committee; serves on Executive Committee as Immediate Past Chair
<b>Mary Pruitt</b> , Legislative Women's Caucus Representative	Attends Council meetings; consults Council on legislative issues that impact women
<b>Wendy Pitts Reeves</b> , East TN Development District Representative	Attends Council meetings; speaks to area groups on the status of women and youth issues; meets with legislators and staff on behalf of the Council; leads Advisory Council
<b>Sandra Silverstein</b> , Southeast TN Development District Representative	Attends Council meetings; consults with Council on economic development issues that impact women; leads Advisory Council
<b>Janis Sontany</b> , Vice-Chair, State House Representative	Attends Council and Executive Committee meetings; consults Council on legislative issues that impact women; advocates to governmental leadership about Council initiatives; speaks to area groups on the status of women and youth issues
<b>Brenda Speer</b> , South Central TN Development District Representative	Attends Council meetings; leads Advisory Council
<b>Nathan Vaughn</b> , Black Legislative Caucus Representative	Attends Council meetings. consults Council on legislative issues that impact women, serves as East Tennessee Representative to Executive Committee
<b>Ellen Vergos</b> , Memphis Area Assoc. Governments Representative	Attends Council Meetings; serves as Secretary of the Council; leads Advisory Council
<b>Mike Williams</b> , Tennessee Senate Representative	Attends Council meetings; consults Council on legislative issues that impact women, advocates to governmental leadership about Council issues
<b>Yvonne Wood</b> , Greater Nashville Region Representative	Attends Executive Committee and Council meetings; speaks to groups on the status of women; meets with legislators and staff on behalf of the Council; serves as Treasurer on Executive Committee; serves as Director of the annual Economic Summit for Women
<b>Jamie Woodson</b> , Tennessee Senate Representative	Attends Council meetings; consults Council on legislative issues that impact women, advocates to governmental leadership about Council issues

